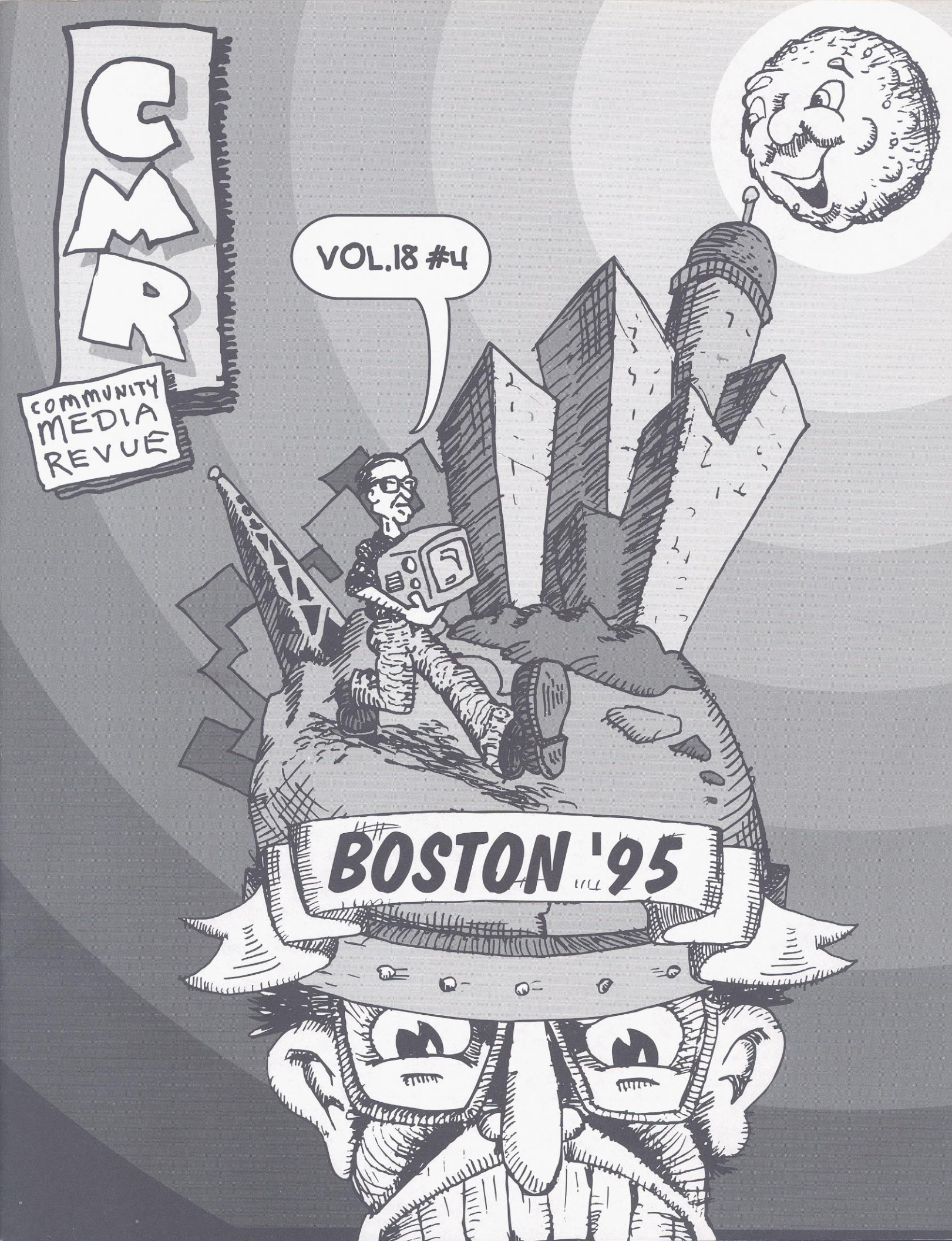

CMR
COMMUNITY MEDIA REVUE
VOL.18 #4
BOSTON '95

Get in touch with your community

with the

Interactive Video Bulletin Board

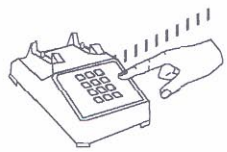


THE CHANNEL THAT TAKES REQUESTS:

- *Lets viewers choose what they see.*
- *Handles up to 999 topics of any length.*
- *Prints reports of what viewers choose.*
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- *Fast, easy setup and maintenance.*
- *Now in use in over 27 U.S. cities.*









What current owner-operators say about the *Interactive Video Bulletin Board:*





"I can watch it taking calls from my office, and know that we're serving the community. The feedback helps us understand our viewing audience's likes and dislikes."

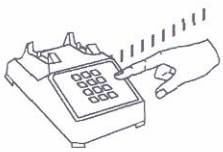
-David Vogel, General Manager, Community Television of Knoxville



"Since placing the system in service, we have seen a community response that now exceeds 18,000 inquiries per month. The Interactive Video Bulletin Board has become an integral part of our community service program"

- Ian N. Wheeler, Executive Director, Fairfax Cable Access Corporation







"Since installing the Interactive Video Bulletin Board, we've gotten more interest and participation from non-profits than we had in the last 10 years. It's less work, more effective, and it's fun for viewers to use!"

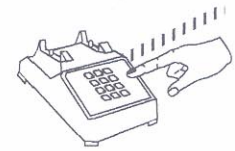
- Lynn Carillo-Cruz, Former Executive Director, Quote...Unquote, Albuquerque





"It's the lowest-cost, highest-impact service we offer to local non-profits. During September...participating organizations reported that an average of 65% of their calls resulted from viewership of the Interactive Video Bulletin Board."

- Barbara Popovic, Executive Director, Chicago Access Corporation







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*Cover illustration by **Archie Miller.***

Planning for Success

The Sea of Activism and Change

By Alan Bushong

I'm honored by my election to the position of **Alliance for Community Media** Board Chair! I'm looking forward to a great year of working with the Alliance Board, staff, members and constituents of community media. In partnership we can work to see democracy flourish by ensuring everyone access to electronic media and promoting effective communication.



Alan Bushong

I don't think any of us will forget **Tony Riddle**'s powerful closing speech at the tremendous **1995 National Conference** in Boston. Throughout his two years as Chair, Tony continually provided dramatic, insightful and often poignant reflections on how our work has a daily, direct impact on the lives of those in our communities. I hope to also bring this quality to the position of chair.

In partnership we work overtime to represent the interests of Alliance members and constituents in communities across the country who both communicate and receive information through community media. **1994 George Stoney Award winner Mike Greenburgh** of **Shea & Gardner** said it best in Boston; we in public interest work are running a marathon. To be successful, we must plan to go the distance—not for a series of bursts or dashes.

We build on some great Alliance successes of the past two years, including:

- generating 80% of the grass roots support for public interest provisions considered in federal telecommunications legislation in 1994;
- gaining supportive language in 1995 legislation;
- challenging censorship provisions of the **1992 Cable Act.**

This work is no coincidence. The Alliance knows that members need effective representation in Washington D.C. in **Congress,** at the **FCC** and in the courts. To that end, the Alliance Board Committee in 1994 identified public policy work as key to delivery of our mission, and identified the following strategies:

- framing the debate;
- pursuing a supportive legal and regulatory environment;
- building coalitions;
- supporting local organizing.

In 1995, working together with our excellent staff, the Alliance Board has adopted the following key objective:

The Alliance will work to pass, by 2001, the federal Telecommunications Access Act, which would guarantee every person free or low-cost access to producing or receiving multi-media information over any public network or distribution network which uses public rights of way, by providing community-based organizations with the needed funding mechanisms, capacity interoperability, technical information and accessibility.

We've recognized that coalition-building is a method to accomplish our strategies, which otherwise are unchanged from 1994. Gaining supportive federal legislation to start the 21st century is an exciting objective!

Our marathon work is over twenty years in progress, but unlike the 26-mile marathon, 26 is not a magic number of years for us. The story of community media is the story of an ongoing grassroots struggle to carve out communications opportunities.

Originally, the path was cleared by those in the major social movements of the 1960's. Those seeking civil rights, equal rights for women and an end to the Vietnam War recognized their inability to communicate their views through centrally-controlled commercial media. We rode on their coattails for a long time.

With the ongoing rush of mergers and further centralization, people's need to represent themselves is greater than ever. We need to educate and involve elected officials and our constituents, and we need the active work of both in creating a supportive environment. In some areas, we are already succeeding. Our 1995 success in gaining supportive provisions in Senate telecommunications legislation was directly due to the hard work of Massachusetts members who in turn had long histories of service to their communities and relationships with elected officials.

Activism is all around us. Political parties, church groups, labor unions, the **Christian Coalition,** the **NAACP,** pro-choice supporters, pro-life supporters, the business community, and environmentalists are just a few examples of groups who actively pursue their needs—groups who are activists.

Still, I sense a hesitancy for us to embrace the role of activist. At the recent (and superb) **Central States Regional Conference** in Dayton, Ohio, I asked how many attendees considered themselves activists. A fairly small number raised their hands—probably a typical response from our members.

Perhaps it is the term activism, which carries the stigma of being part of subversive, violent activities. Yet looking at the activists of today, that label has no validity. Success in American politics requires activism.

American politics are driven by two main factors: money and numbers of voters. The telecommunications environment is dominated by enormous, powerful, wealthy corporations. Although the Alliance does not have the money to compete, the Alliance does represent the interests of a million people using community media nationwide, and millions more who are provided unique and valuable community information. It is through the voices of these millions to their elected officials that we can succeed in protecting their rights.

The Alliance is part of a noble cause. The Allliance is here for everybody. Our agenda is to empower people to speak for themselves, and to increase the diversity of information sources. Let's work together as activists in 1996 as we run another mile of our marathon.

Alan Bushong is Executive Director of Capital Community Television in Salem, Oregon, as well as the Chair of the Alliance for Community Media.

Organism Internet

by Dirk Koning

Before we get too far down the road of the **Information Superhighway** analogy, I want to suggest another. It's easy to see the value in the highway analogy when it comes to a simple visualization of what is developing as a phenomenally complex maze. One main problem with equating the developing worldwide information infrastructure to ribbons of cement is that superhighways are dead. More appropriately: inanimate. The information era is alive and multiplying on thousands of concurrent levels like the spread of cancer. Not only that, the organic maze is being choked by the exponential growth of information kudzu.

Try this one on for size. **The Information Circulation System.**

We've got veins and arteries out there pumping information like blood around the organism: Earth. We need the heart for power and we need the head for control. A certain balance is required for optimal health. In other words you can't pump too much information through the veins or you increase the blood pressure and risk system shutdown. Too much non-digestible information creates risks of communication cholesterol. Not enough quality associated with the relative quantity and iron-poor communication results. And we need to realize the importance in having capillaries burrow throughout the community/organism at large, to insure the health of every extremity. Wholesale blood flow stoppage to any appendage could ultimately spell doom for the general organism. Certainly there will be rich, healthy pockets developing and an ever-changing array of new extensions growing and some dwindling.

The Information Circulation System model seems to be far more realistic based on what is happening and has the foundational structure to accommodate longer term development. Another reason I think the analogy works better is because it is based on the fundamental development of the very technology used. For instance, we are moving information as light. Historically we can trace the roots of all life on Earth to that very same process. (Sunlight impregnating the thin incubator band above the Earth called the atmosphere, creating warmth and power and being converted through photosynthesis to blend with local properties to create growth and life.)

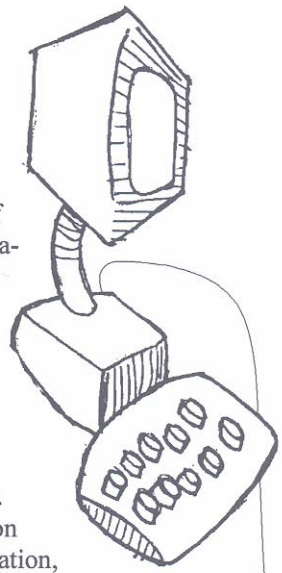
In some strange way it's as if we have created some evolutionary feedback loop that involves light as knowledge and knowledge as light and light as knowledge and...

Albert Einstein's genius extends far beyond physics and quantum mechanics. He offered many quotes and formulas to describe science and simultaneously knew they had vast social science applications as well. One that applies nicely to the above mentioned notion follows:

As a circle of light increases
So does the
Circumference of darkness
Around it

If you equate light to knowledge or information, it clearly demonstrates the well known adage, "the more you know, the more you realize how much you don't know." When people ask me where we're going with this Information Circulation System, I'm quick to respond, "I don't know."

The common convergence of all information traffic to binary coded pulses of ones and zeros is turning traditional providers inside out. The historical empires built around specific delivery mechanisms and on spectrum scarcity could crumble as fast as vinyl records. A strong Information Organism will consider the evolution of its Information System in the same light as its other sustaining systems: water, sewage and electricity. The Latin sub-root for both Community and Communication is, "to share." Communities form to share goods, services and systems for the combined benefit of the whole. As the Information Circulation System grows, host organisms should consider the community value of owning the veins and arteries and allowing, through broadband leases, the free flow of content.



And what of content? Very few people seem concerned about the exponential growth of content due to information technology. Most seem to be embracing the notion as if to stand on shore, arms outstretched to hug an approaching tsunami because we like water. What of the distinction between Data, Information, Knowledge and Wisdom? More data is just that, more data. Somehow it needs to be assembled to form information. Okay, easy enough. The ones and zeros of data are reassemble into words, sounds and pictures. Now, how do we edit the vast array of information to build knowledge? And then what magical mix is required to perpetuate wisdom? I don't know. If you look at the traditional paths to wisdom, they are almost exclusively established on the notion of limiting information to a few critical kernels that lead to universal truths. Colleges carefully craft curricula to focus like a laser on fields of knowledge, eliminating "non-essential or unrelated" data. The whole legal system is based on specifically narrowing the field of available information, past case law and hearsay, to arrive at the justice of truth. So is more better–or just more? It seems the most critical skill required in the information age is that of editor. It's not how much information you can collect, but how little you have to process for the wisdom desired. In a recent dream, a Yoda-like character in a three piece pin striped suit waved his finger at me with the deftness of a great scholar, and said slowly, "The future, my son, is in storage and retrieval."

"It's not how much information you can collect, but how little you have to process for the wisdom desired."

Neil Postman in ***Technopoly*** publishes a story Socrates tells a friend based on Plato's ***Phaedrus*** about Thamus, the king of a great city of Upper Egypt. Here it is:

"Thamus once entertained the god

See *Organism*, page 20...

Power, Politics & Public Relations

Twelve Tips for Influencing Congress through the Local Media

by Jeffrey Hops

The Power of Public Relations. My first job after college taught me the power of public relations. At **CBS Television City** in Los Angeles, I helped to churn out the daily output of publicity releases. Shortly after starting there, I began to see that CBS's public relations efforts (including "fluff" pieces) were showing up in the press and people's conversations, and were indeed affecting what people saw and thought about in real life. I eventually realized that everything I knew about **Ted Turner, the Disney Co., David Hasselhoff** or the government of Mexico was due in part to a phalanx of public relations executives.

Washington DC's Obsession with Public Relations. Washington, too, has an obsession with public relations, for two reasons. The first reason is power. Or, more accurately, the *appearance* of power—which is power. Groups are involved in the political process only if they are perceived as having the necessary votes, money, organization, and public support. Conversely, invisibility is impotence–and groups are excluded if they fail to draw decisionmakers' attention.

The second reason for this obsession is that public relations does sway popular attitudes and, consequently, voter behavior. A good public relations campaign can turn a Senator's support for an issue from negative to positive, or (particularly relevant to the **Alliance for Community Media**) turn a non-issue into something important enough to potentially change people's votes.

Political Advocates to Public Relations Specialists. Thus far, the Alliance has achieved significant legislative victories without a sophisticated public relations campaign or high visibility. The next stage of our battle, however, is not likely to be so easy. The **Regional Bells Operating Companies** (RBOCs) are probably expecting the House to adopt the Senate's virtually non-existent PEG access language. That's because they perceive us as an adversary that they can roll over in their sleep. We must wake them up.

Alliance members throughout the country need to become not just political advocates (at which most of our members have been doing a terrific job) but public relations specialists as well. In order to win the next round in Congress, we must let our local broadcast and print media outlets know who we are, what we're doing, who's participating, and who's watching. With the assistance of **Mary Clayton Crozier** of **Boston Neighborhood Network,** I've developed the following tips to help you sway local public opinion — and ultimately increase the visibility of our issues in Washington DC...

"I eventually realized that everything I knew about Ted Turner, the Disney Co., David Hasselhoff or the government of Mexico was due in part to a phalanx of public relations executives..."

Alliance for Community Media Public Relations Tips. The focus of our message should be that community access is keeping the spirit of our local communities alive or, more succinctly, "Community Access supports the life of our communities."

Tip #1: Develop a press mailing list. This list should consist of every entertainment and/or telecommunications and/or civic affairs reporter in your area. Also include in your press lists community/free/advertising circular papers and college papers and radio stations. These papers are hungry for pre-written copy and story ideas.

Tip #2: Try to issue a press release at least twice a month. You should already be issuing press releases on specific programming you think will be of interest to the larger community. However, the subject matter need not always be "news." A profile of a local user access user who is doing something interesting, creative, or socially conscious is enough. Include black and white photos of the producer or a frame of the video–community newspapers love running pictures with captions as a way of giving added vitality to their paper. Try to work the PEG access message into the text and overall content of the release.

Tip #3: Distribute your monthly programming schedules widely. Be sure to send copies to your press list as well as your Senators, member of Congress, state legislators, city and county officials, and Public Utility Commissioners.

Tip #4: Use your channel's bulletin board. Virtually every access center has a community bulletin board which they use during non-programming hours. This can be an important place to put messages supporting the concept of PEG access as important to community life.

Tip #5: Use your channel for PEG access PSAs. Ask your producers to produce 30-second spots about why PEG access is important to their organization's work or art. Public figures (congresspeople, state legislators) are especially good people to ask. You may also want to produce programs on how PEG access programs are made. Use this program as a way to invite people into your center.

Tip #6: Invite members of the press to participate in programming. You may want to find someone at the center to have a "press roundtable" show. You may want to program the show around having these journalists discuss community issues.

Tip #7: Produce a documentary about your local newspaper or television news station. This could include interviews with editors, reporters, etc. You can stress during the interview their commitment to the ideals of the First Amendment. A non-

See *Twelve Tips*, page 21...

Alliance Information Infrastructure

The Alliance Web Site

by Kari Peterson

The **Alliance Information Infrastructure Committee** continues to focus its attention in three major areas: 1) developing a **World Wide Web** site for the Alliance, 2) developing a selection of electronic mailing lists (sometimes referred to as "listservs") for Alliance members to subscribe to, and 3) educating both our board and our membership-at-large about the growing use of electronic communication.

The web. The goal in creating a web site is many fold. First and most importantly, a web site is an excellent vehicle for information dissemination. Those of you who have access to the World Wide Web (WWW) surely understand the value of establishing "a presence" in this growing network of sites. Web addresses (known as URLs) are popping up all over the place—on business cards, in ads and brochures and even on billboards—directing would-be info-seekers to these unique, customized, virtual displays. This is an efficient, fast and inexpensive way for individuals to get information about an organization (for example, membership details, legislative updates and calls to action, conference and publication information). This can save the national office time and money!

Creating a web site also places the Alliance squarely on the electronic playing field. As we advocate for citizen access to emerging electronic media, we will have an understanding of what these new tools are and a heightened sensitivity as to their use and value.

The Alliance will be tackling many lofty issues and such questions as what information to provide via WWW, how to present it and how to update it in order to keep it current and valuable. We will also consider policies concerning "linkage" — to whom do we provide links and where in our "pages" should these links exist? Who will provide links to the Alliance on their pages? There will be design, space and speed issues as well. Finally, we must consider ways in which we promote our URL. As a statement about the Alliance, the Web site will become one of our key platforms for presenting ourselves to the world. It has the potential to reach millions of people all over the globe. The WWW is radically changing the way we communicate with the world. Thousands of organizations are contemplating these fundamental issues and how we resolve them will impact our effectiveness in this new medium. Watch for the Alliance's own URL to be released soon!

Electronic Mailing Lists. Electronic mailing lists, sometimes erroneously called "listservs," are programs which distribute electronic mail to a group of people who are subscribed to a particular list. Subscribing and using these lists requires a computer and modem, and an e-mail account. Electronic mail lists invite input and discussion, generally on a prescribed topic.

The Alliance has had an electronic mailing list for nearly a year. Currently, approximately 250 individuals are subscribed and discuss a wide variety of topics ranging from equipment selection to current legislative activity. Discussion involves national staff and leadership, access center staff, volunteer producers, activists attempting to bring access to their communities—and everything in between.

The AII committee proposed a recommendation to create four new electronic mailing lists and got dozens of suggestions and words of support. The number of possible lists is nearly endless; critical mass is the only limiting factor. So, based on the interest expressed by the Alliance's electronic community, the following lists will soon emerge: 1) Alliance announcements from the national office—including public policy updates, conference and Hometown updates, membership updates and more; 2) technical talk, for staff and producers interested in equipment issues; 3) operational issues and policies—for those who run Public, Educational and Governmental Access and/or L.O. centers; 4) an electronic soapbox—a catchall for open discussion on broad and eclectic issues.

Educating our members. The committee will continue its regular column in ***CMR*** and will consider other avenues for educating our membership and leadership on the uses of electronic communication tools.

If you are interested in participating on the committee, or just want to be included on the committee's mailing list, send e-mail to Kari Peterson at kapeters@dcn.davis.ca.us. Everybody's ideas are welcome. Committee members include Randy Ammon <mcat@mcat.org>;

See *Alliance Web Site,* page 20...

Visit



these sites

Access Tucson
http://access.tucson.org/
Access Los Altos
http://153.18.60.51/ala.html
Access Sacramento
http://www.sna.com/access
Davis Community Network
http://wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us/DCN/
'Olelo: The Corporation for Community Television
http://hookomo.aloha.net/~ctpa/olelo/olelo.html
Public Access Television Channel 2
http://www.avalon.net/~patv/
Amherst Community Television
http://www.webjammers.com/actv/
Cambridge Community Television
http://www.ai.mit.edu/pro jects/iiip/Cambridge/cctv.html
Somerville Community Access Television
http://turnpike.net/metro/scat/
Minneapolis Telecommunications Network
http://www.mtn.org/mtn/index.html
Missoula Community Access Television
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http://www.teleport.com/~rawdirt/pca. html
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Arlington Community Television
http://www.channel33.org/
Fairfax Cable Access Corporation
http://axsamer.org/programming/progindex.html
Brattleboro Community Television
http://www.sover.net/~bctv/
Thurston Community Television
http://rs6a.wln.com/~tctvch3/welcome. html

TRAINERS' SIG

The Alliance for Community Media

by Julian Ross Braver and jesika maria ross

Hello and welcome to the inagural edition of the **Trainers' Special Interest Group** (SIG) column in ***CMR.*** What is the Trainers SIG? Glad you asked. The SIG is an organization of access staff and volunteers working together to empower individuals, groups and communities to express themselves through electronic media.

Who is a trainer? Is it only those individuals who stand in front of a class and teach who may be considered "trainers?" How might we broaden the definition of "trainer" to embrace more of the people who make access their life's work? If you are a facility assistant, who helps people check out remote units; are you training? What if you are a programming person who calls a producer to inform them that they could reduce wind noise by using a screen? If you are an outreach coordinator who meets with a group of teachers to tell them how their students can use your access channel as a forum for discussion, are you "training?" The simple answer is an emphatic ***YES*** to all of the above. We are all trainers. Training must be integrated into everything we do. In every interaction we have with a member of the public, we are transferring some bit of knowledge, some skill which will help our clients to be more effective creators of messages. We are helping people help themselves.

This definition of "trainer" is important to keep in mind if we who facilitate access hope to avoid compartmentalizing and disassociating the tasks we perform. The danger in such a division of labor is that one can become ensnared in their personal minutia, only handling individual day-to-day tasks while losing sight of the larger picture. While we are all aware of the "how" of providing access and the tasks our positions require, we must not forget the "why." One must always keep in sight the reasons why her/his position is critical to the access organization.

While the paradigm of "training" being a separate box on the organizational chart is becoming increasingly outdated, there is still value in taking additional time and giving extra care to focus specifically on this critical area of responsibility. For the reasons listed above, calling training a "special interest" may sound like a misnomer, however setting up a SIG does allow us the opportunity to discuss pedagogical method, curricula and syllabi to optimize the service we provide to our clients. For these purposes, the **Alliance for Community Media**'s Trainers' SIG exists.

"Everyone involved with access is a trainer. Anyone who facilitates, trains."

As a trainer, do you ever wonder how you might avoid reinventing the wheel? Do you think about strategies which others might have employed which would be useful to you? Do you have successful techniques which you think others could use? If the answer to any or all of the above questions is yes, you should be a member of the Trainers' SIG. The SIG exists for the purposes of:

- disseminating community media training information;
- sharing strategies, materials and curricula;
- forging alliances;
- providing networking opportunities on local, regional, national and international levels;
- establishing solidarity among trainers, and;
- building a unifying support system for access trainers (which is *everyone!*).

The SIG recently held several meetings at the national conference of the Alliance for Community Media in Boston. Topics discussed included:

- how training programs should train for social activism, media literacy, stimulating civic communication and empowerment;
- making access centers truly "accessible" to those without a great deal of time/resources;
- training groups/individuals with special needs/challenges, and;
- how our training can truly "make a difference."

In addition to the SIG sessions, several workshops/roundtables were held on training-related topics including:

- developing and evaluating effective training programs, and
- innovative training philosophies and practices.

The SIG is working on offering similar networking sessions/workshops at *Alliance* regional conferences.

Besides the benefits of conference sessions, what else does the SIG have to offer? Likely our single most effective tool is our newsletter ***On Track.*** The newsletter is published quarterly and contains many useful articles covering a variety of topics. We are always looking for contributions to *On Track*, and also welcome any feedback concerning how the SIG can most effectively meet your needs.

Everyone involved with access is a trainer. Anyone who facilitates, trains. Share your knowledge, join the SIG.

What is the cost of membership in this valuable group? Would you believe $10.00? If you are already an Alliance for Community Media member for at least the $35.00 rate, you can join the Trainers' SIG for only an additional $10.00. Please direct your fees to **Kelly Matthews, Director of Membership Services, Alliance for Community Media, 666 11th St. NW, Ste. 806, Washington, DC 20001.** If you have questions about the SIG, please contact either SIG co-coordinator Julian Ross Braver, 'Olelo: The Corporation for Community Television, 1122 Mapunapuna St., Honolulu, HI 96819. Phone: (808) 834-0007 ext. 128, fax (808) 836-2546, or e-mail attn@aloha.net; or SIG co-coordinator

See Trainers' SIG, page 21...

Public Policy Update

Extending Our Work to the State Level

by Alan Bushong

Changes in federal legislation and the entry of telephone companies and satellite distributors into delivery of multiple channel video services are causing the Alliance and members to pay increasing attention to legislation and administrative work at the state level.

The Public Policy Committee is working on approaches to universal service and model state legislation which will help members navigate the new waters of state level work. A new law in Connecticut may provide the model we seek.

Connecticut Senate Bill No. 360 includes admirable requirements to fund public access. The bill states that current law requires cable TV companies to provide funding for public access programming. Bill No. 360 extends that and other public access provisions of the law to "multichannel program distributors" which include video dial tone systems and companies that use satellite technologies. Specific provisions include:

1. a requirement to assess all subscribers (cable TV and all other multichannel video programs distributors) $5 per year to support public access;
2. the state's ability to increase or decrease that amount by 40%, plus annual consumer price index adjustments;
3. a restatement of cable company requirements to provide facilities, equipment, and technical and managerial support for public access (this requirement is extended to other distributors once the franchise area is subject to effective competition;
4. provisions for community-based nonprofit organizations to assume responsibility for public access operations.

While the current funding mechanism may not meet the needs of all communities, the concepts embodied in this bill would imbed two-way telecommunications access as a part of universal service. We in community media know that subscribers like the presence of community media, that the costs are minimal, and that this small amount of money that stays home helps us to build better communities.

The State of Connecticut just issued a call for comments on implementation of this bill. The Alliance is developing comments which may serve as a model for states around the nation. At first glance, my comments are simply "Way to go, Connecticut!"

"We know from surveys that people who watch community media are far more active in voting than the populace at large."

Working with state officials. One of the best ways to provide education to elected officials at any level is to bring them on the channels. While many of us televise city and county government meetings, and a growing number provide channel space to U.S. representative and senators, we may have overlooked state level elected officials.

We have a lot to offer. We know that community media allows a thorough discussion of issues, as opposed to the 30 seconds often offered by commercial media. We know that 30-second commercial spots can cost a fortune to produce and distribute, while community media costs are low. We know from surveys that people who watch community media are far more active in voting than the populace at large.

Bringing elected officials and their staffs to your center and providing channel space will create an understanding that can overcome negative publicity in commercial media. The best way to counteract the trivialization of community media is by example. The more people know about us, the better! Our channels have unique and valuable programming, and community media is affordable.

If we fail to involve our state leaders, we have chosen to not represent ourselves, and have defaulted to the information spread by commercial media. Hopefully, we will work with the media to increasingly represent community media correctly. At the same time, it seems ironic that we might not take our own advice to our communities to "speak for ourselves."

Let's figure out a way to involve our state elected officials. If you have government access as a part of your mission, you are set. If not, perhaps working with the **League of Women Voters,** your **City Club** or another civic organization would provide a positive way to involve elected officials.

Let's be creative. The ideas below are just a few tested methods.

1. Town hall meetings on the channels
2. Candidate forum programs
3. Live call-in programs
4. Channel IDs

As state legislatures take a larger role in shaping our future, let's take a larger role in providing information and access to them. Our communities will be the winners.

Alan Bushong is Chair of the Alliance Board, and Chair of the Alliance Public Policy Committee as well.

Information is Power

The Alliance needs your assistance in our efforts to build our national government and public relations effort. Please take some time to send us the following information from your community media center:

1) Franchise agreement;
2) State and Local Laws and Regulations regarding Access;
3) List of local organizations that use your access center;
4) Policies and guidelines, particularly with regard to: a) access by out of franchise distributors/users; b) access by non-commercial entities that make commercial announcements or access by commercial entities that make commercial announcements; and c) censorship (or self-censorship) of human nudity, sexual or political topics, or any other content-based restric-

See *Information*, page 19...

Boston '95

Community Media: Thriving in the Technology Revolution

by Rika Welsh

This year's **Alliance for Community Media International Conference and Trade Show** in Boston served as a milestone in the history of our organization for several reasons. With 704 people attending, conference attendance was the highest in many years. The trade show featured 27 exhibitors and was highlighted by an interactive **Internet Lab** and a **World Wide Web** page for the conference. Also very significant is that revenues from the event rang in at $190,753.50 (per the conference management company's final report) far exceeding the break-even goal of $140,000. An impressive result from the zealous group of planners...up there in the Northeast!



Alliance Chair Tony Riddle confers with Boston Mayor Thomas Menino before introducing him to the group.

Money, albeit a vital lubricant for the Alliance's activities during these challenging times, is not the most important measure of success, however. This conference had built into it an amazing amount of activity and dissemination of information. There were 10 half-day pre-conferences, attended by 174 registrants. The conference itself had 10 tracks spanning the spectrum of interest, including *Building the Commuity Media Center of Tomorrow, Fundraising and Development, New Technologies, Issues for Trainers, Educational Access, Governmental Access,* and *Public Policy.* Along with another half-dozen 'stand alone' topics, the workshops offered totaled over 65 . In addition, *Managers A-Z,* a full day specifically designed for access facility staff (trainers, engineers, executive directors and their boards of directors) provided another 24 presentation/discussion groups. Although the whole conference had a smooth and energetic tone about it...if there was one complaint, it seemed to be that there were too many things from which to choose! Again, kudos to all of the hard working planners!

The international dimension of this annual event really came alive this year. Over a dozen countries were represented, thanks to the efforts of a hard working **Conference Committee,** the new and effective organizing tool the Internet provides, and the growing relationships that some of our members have established with their counterpart techno-revolutionaries throughout the world. The consensus—that emerging communications technologies play a vital role in bringing people and communities together to share experiences, build bonds, and appreciate their diversity—has now created a global challenge. This challenge is to share concerns, insights and lessons. To build a bridge, just as the Alliance did years ago from community to community, now we must build it 'country by country.' This conference provided a good backdrop for an international "Think Tank" and the dynamic quality of this group of people was infectious.

The **Public Policy** and image fronts offered their own milestone. **Meredith Jones'** speech marked the first time an **FCC** official of her stature addressed an access group. But perhaps the more important event was her participation in the **Hometown Awards** ceremony. In conversation, not only did she speak very highly of access and the need for continued PEG channels, but she was impressed by the by the quality and types of programming she saw at the ceremony. As **Hubert Jessup** pointed out, "one of our goals was to increase the visibility of access at the FCC—and we succeeded!"

The **NCTA's Dan Brenner** was equally impressed and began a dialogue with Alliance members on several fronts. **Nancy Bicknell Larkin,** a founding member of the **National Federation of Local Cable Programmers** (the precurser to the Alliance for Community Media) and now a Vice President at **Continental Cablevision,** bridged the past to the present by some great and very humorous analogies of shared struggles. The historic halls of Faneuil Hall, where Daniel Webster and John Hancock, John Quincy Adams and Paul Revere all took to the podium in the name of our independence, this July rang out with the celebration of the Hometown Awards. A befitting and inspirational setting!



Jewell Ryan-White Award for Cultural Diversity recipient Curtis Henderson of Boston Neighborhood Network passes the award along to 1995 recipient Margie Reese, Executive Director of Cable Access of Dallas.

No convention is as successful as one that throws great parties–and this conven-

"When the show was over and it was time to go, John Curtis and Steve Spangaro from Australia both gave me a big hug and said, 'we'll see you soon, we won't say good-bye!' What I am still left with today is the feeling that we've helped build some bridges between people, countries and cultures."
—Judi Kelemen, Chair, International Planning Committee

tion did not let us down. The **Boston Computer Museum** provided a perfect setting for the **International Reception.** More than 300 people mingled and took advantage of the opportunity to meet each other...or busied themselves with the *Walk through the Internet* and other exhibits. For many who had been around since the last Boston conference, one-upping the boat cruise of '85 was a real challenge. However, taking over the entire **Aquarium** along with a dance tent right on the Boston Harbor seems to have done the trick! One of the highlights of the evening was **Curtis Henderson**'s wonderful jazz voice, wafting thought this underworld of glimmering fish and gliding tortoises.



1995 Alliance Conference Chair and Malden (MA) Access Television Executive Director Rika Welsh kicks off the conference by presenting Kia'i Kaleo (Protector of the Voice).

Last but by no means least, another milestone. This was **Kia'i Kaleo**'s first conference on 'the mainland.' In case you are wondering...Kia'i Kaleo is a *pahu,* a wooden shark skin drum, an instrument of power and sacredness that was presented to the Alliance last year in Hawaii. *Pahu* are given proper names and passed from generation to generation. Kia'i Kaleo means 'Protector of the Voice' and he is to travel to each Alliance annual convention, absorbing and purifying the spirit of our events, until such time as we go back to Hawaii, when he will finally go home.

He had spent his first year away from Hawaii in an affectionate setting at MATV. Staff, producers and the myriad of convention planning volunteers had become accustomed to finding their own quiet connection to his powers. A new tradition was established with his presence at the opening ceremony. **Russell Peters,** President of the **Council of Chiefs for the Wampanaug Nation** presented Kia'i Kaleo a piece of *wampum* from Cape Cod, a symbol of appreciation from their tradition. It is hoped by the Boston planners that each year, the native peoples from each conference area will be invited to participate in our ceremonies honoring Kia'i Kaleo and add to his presence with their own.



Judi Kelemen of Lowell Telecommunications Corporation, who coordinated the International Reception at the 1995 Conference, chats with Alliance for Community Media Executive Director Barry Forbes.

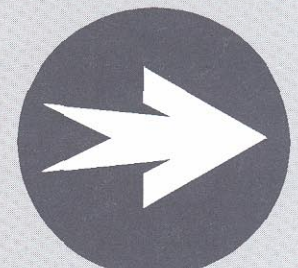
As stated by **Brian Wilson,** Chair of the hosting region, "equally important for me at these events, and with renewed energy, is the building of relationships, the collaboration of effort, and the sharing of ideas. This summer,

See *Boston '95,* page 15

The Alliance hosted colleagues from...

Australia
Brazil
Canada
Denmark
France
Germany
Hong Kong
Israel
Mexico
Netherlands
South Africa
South Korea
Sweden
United Nations
United States

Hometown Video



Festival Winners

1995 Hometown Award Winners

Production Awards

Category	Pro/Non	Single/Series	Title	Facility	City	State
About Public Access	Open	Single Program	CTV Insider	CTV North Suburbs	Roseville	MN
Access Program Promotion	Media Professional	Single Program	TCTV Volunteers & Highlights	Torrance Community Television	Torrance	CA
Access Program Promotion	Non-Professional	Single Program	Judicial Murder	Access Sacramento	Sacramento	CA
Arts Programming	Media Professional	Single Program	Shirley Kirkes: Passion and Dance	CityTV	Santa Monica	CA
Arts Programming	Media Professional	Series	It's the Arts	Miami Valley Cable Council	Centerville	OH
Arts Programming	Non-Professional	Single Program	Art Without Walls	Somerville Community Access TV	Somerville	MA
Arts Programming	Non-Professional	Series	Where the Waters Meet	MATA	Milwaukee	WI
Computer Art	Media Professional	Single Program	Staff Museum	DATV	Dayton	OH
Computer Art	Non-Professional	Single Program	Two All-Beef Patties	Access Tucson	Tucson	AZ
Documentary Event	Media Professional	Single Program	Vancouver Riot	Rogers Community 4	Vancouver	BC
Documentary Event	Non-Professional	Single Program	Celebrating the Pacific: 6th Festival	'Olelo	Honolulu	HI
Documentary Profile	Media Professional	Single Program	No Place You Wanna Be	Chelmsford Community Television	Chelmsford	MA
Documentary Profile	Non-Professional	Single Program	The Mill Valley Children's Garden	Viacom - Marin 31	San Rafael	CA
Documentary Public Awareness	Media Professional	Single Program	Is It Really Away?	CityTV	Santa Monica	CA
Documentary Public Awareness	Non-Professional	Single Program	Beyond the Loss of the Breast	Mid-Peninsula Access Corporation	Palo Alto	CA
Educational	Media Professional	Single Program	From the Inside	'Olelo	Honolulu	HI
Educational	Media Professional	Series	Parks Plus	Fairfax County Cable Channel 16	Fairfax	VA
Educational	Non-Professional	Single Program	The Mill Valley Children's Garden	Viacom - Marin 31	San Rafael	CA
Educational	Non-Professional	Series	The Wacky Science Show	Continental Cablevision	Rolling Meadws	IL
Entertainment	Media Professional	Single Program	Christmas in Cullentown	Rogers Cablesystems Ltd.	Oshawa	Ont
Entertainment	Media Professional	Series	Baakoyie	Rogers Community 4	Vancouver	BC
Entertainment	Non-Professional	Single Program	SockTrek - The Motionless Picture	KCTV	Santa Barbara	CA
Entertainment	Non-Professional	Series	Off the Wall and Over the Top	Staten Island Community Television	Staten Island	NY
Ethnic/Cultural Expression	Media Professional	Single Program	Given Opportunities	Chicago Access Corporation	Chicago	IL
Ethnic/Cultural Expression	Media Professional	Series	Roshni	WLRN Cable-Tap	Miami	FL
Ethnic/Cultural Expression	Non-Professional	Single Program	Songs of Sovereignty	CityTV	Santa Monica	CA
Ethnic/Cultural Expression	Non-Professional	Series	New World Visions	Montgomery Community Television	Rockville	MD
Gay & Lesbian Programming	Media Professional	Single Program	Celebrating Our Community	Cambridge Community Television	Cambridge	MA
Gay & Lesbian Programming	Media Professional	Series	Get Used To It	CityChannel 10	West Hollywood	CA
Gay & Lesbian Programming	Non-Professional	Single Program	First Aid for Soldiers	Cambridge Community Television	Cambridge	MA
Gay & Lesbian Programming	Non-Professional	Series	The Fresca Vinyl Show	CityChannel 10	West Hollywood	CA
Informational	Media Professional	Single Program	Lead Story: Holiday Shopping Spree	Continental Cablevision	Lawrence	MA
Informational	Media Professional	Series	Long Beach Television News	CableVision Industries	Long Beach	CA
Informational	Non-Professional	Single Program	Solutions for Survival: Greyston	Continental Cablevision	Cortlandt Manor	NY
Informational	Non-Professional	Series	Community in Crisis	Jones Intercable Public Access	Tampa	FL
Innovative	Media Professional	Single Program	Sound Bite Theatre	Jones Intercable Public Access	Tampa	FL
Innovative	Media Professional	Series	All About Weather	Miami Valley Cable Council	Centerville	OH
Innovative	Non-Professional	Single Program	My Name Is Cheula	Staten Island Community Television	Staten Island	NY
Innovative	Non-Professional	Series	Job Search	Community Access TV of Salina	Salina	KS
Instructional/Training	Media Professional	Single Program	Buscando Trabajo	Multnomah Community Television	Gresham	OR
Instructional/Training	Media Professional	Series	The Resident Experts	Continental Cablevision	Rolling Meadws	IL
Instructional/Training	Non-Professional	Single Program	The Urban Gardener - Bulbs	BCAT	Brooklyn	NY
Instructional/Training	Non-Professional	Series	Health's Kitchen	BronxNet	Bronx	NY
International	Media Professional	Single Program	Greetings From Iraq	Cambridge Community Television	Cambridge	MA
International	Non-Professional	Single Program	Postcards from India	Viacom - Marin 31	San Rafael	CA
L.O. Program Promotion	Media Professional	Single Program	The Lemon-Aid Show	Rogers Community 10	Toronto	Ont
Live	Media Professional	Single Program	Spartan Hockey	WELM/TCI Cablevision	East Lansing	MI
Live	Media Professional	Series	Math Homework Hotline	DPS TV	Dayton	OH
Live	Non-Professional	Single Program	Trivia Challenge	Burlington Cable Access Television	Burlington	MA

Live	Non-Professional	Series	1359 Jazz Club	Cambridge Community Television	Cambridge	MA
Local News	Open	Series	Wake-Up Germantown!	GHS-TV	Germantown	TN
Magazine Format	Media Professional	Series	Chicago Works!	City of Chicago	Chicago	IL
Magazine Format	Non-Professional	Series	All Pro Kids	Fairfax Cable Access Corporation	Fairfax	VA
Municipal	Open	Single Program	Houston Capital Improvement Plan	The Municipal Channel	Houston	TX
Municipal	Open	Series	Sheriff's Office Spotlight	Hillsborough County Cable	Tampa	FL
Music Video	Media Professional	Single Program	Open Your Eyes by Tea Wire	Meredith Cable	Eagan	MN
Music Video	Non-Professional	Single Program	Mirage	GRTV	Grand Rapids	MI
Original Teleplay	Media Professional	Single Program	The Earthquake Zone	Rogers Community 4	Vancouver	BC
Original Teleplay	Non-Professional	Single Program	Video Junkie	Vision Cable Community Access	Clearwater	FL
Performing Arts	Media Professional	Single Program	Holiday Ice Show	Vision Cable of Pinellas	Clearwater	FL
Performing Arts	Media Professional	Series	Bronx Live	BronxNet	Bronx	NY
Performing Arts	Non-Professional	Single Program	Music da camera	Northwest Community TV	Long Lake	MN
Performing Arts	Non-Professional	Series	Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra	Access Vision	Battle Creek	MI
Programming By Senior Citizens	Non-Professional	Single Program	Operation Independence	Comcast Cablevision	Columbia	MD
Programming By Senior Citizens	Non-Professional	Series	The Senior Scene of Oceanside	Oceanside Community Television	Oceanside	CA
Programming By Youth	Non-Professional	Single Program	Tampa Bay: Above, Below and Beyond	Tampa Educational Cable Consortium	Tampa	FL
Programming By Youth	Non-Professional	Series	Access Together	GHS-TV	Germantown	TN
Programming for Senior Citizens	Media Professional	Single Program	Senior Times: Volunteers	Fairfax County Cable Channel 16	Fairfax	VA
Programming for Senior Citizens	Non-Professional	Single Program	Nothin's Stoppin' 'Em	Communications on Cable TV	Berkeley Hts	NJ
Programming For Youth	Media Professional	Single Program	Home Remedies for a Violent City	MATA	Milwaukee	WI
Programming For Youth	Media Professional	Series	Teens Talk-Line	Suburban Community Television	Doylestown	PA
Programming For Youth	Non-Professional	Single Program	The Treehouse Club	Rogers Community 4	Vancouver	BC
Programming For Youth	Non-Professional	Series	Home Alone in Salina	Community Access TV of Salina	Salina	KS
Public Service Announcements	Media Professional	Single Program	Pick It Up	LA CityView 35	Los Angeles	CA
Public Service Announcements	Media Professional	Series	Discover Our Spirit	Continental Cablevision	Lawrence	MA
Public Service Announcements	Non-Professional	Single Program	Levels Infomercial PSA	Great Neck PATV	Great Neck	NY
Public Service Announcements	Non-Professional	Series	Community Action News PSA	Miami Valley Cable Council	Centerville	OH
Religious	Media Professional	Single Program	Favor Seekers, Grateful Dancers	BCTV	El Dorado	KS
Religious	Non-Professional	Single Program	Word for the World	Wheaton Community Television	Wheaton	IL
Sports	Media Professional	Single Program	Plano Martial Arts Magazine	Plano Television Network	Plano	TX
Sports	Media Professional	Series	Sports Report	Vision Cable of Pinellas	Clearwater	FL
Sports	Non-Professional	Single Program	W.O.L. Diving Championships	Miami Valley Cable Council	Centerville	OH
Sports	Non-Professional	Series	Waycross Community TV Sports	Waycross Community Television	Forest Park	OH
Talk Show	Media Professional	Single Program	Vancouver Focus	Rogers Community 4	Vancouver	BC
Talk Show	Media Professional	Series	The Open Circle with Maria Clark	PCTC	Piscataway	NJ
Talk Show	Non-Professional	Single Program	Forward Motion	Montgomery Community Television	Rockville	MD
Talk Show	Non-Professional	Series	WomanSide	Fairfax Cable Access Corporation	Fairfax	VA
Video Art	Media Professional	Single Program	The Dorothy I Love You Show	Chicago Access Corporation	Chicago	IL
Video Art	Non-Professional	Single Program	Weaving the Matrix	ACTV	Austin	TX

Facility Awards

Award	Category	Budget Category	Winner	Winning Facility	City	State
Overall Excellence	Educational Access	Under $400,000	Manchester Community Television	Manchester Community Television	Manchester	NH
Overall Excellence	Educational Access	Over $400,000	Sacramento Educational Cable Consortium	Sacramento Educational Cable Consortium	Sacramento	CA
Overall Excellence	Government Access	Under $400,000	The City of Wheaton	Wheaton Community Television	Wheaton	IL
Overall Excellence	Government Access	Over $400,000	Government Television Channel 3	Government Television Channel 3	Columbus	OH
Overall Excellence	Local Origination	Under $400,000	Cablevision of Newark	Cablevision of Newark	Newark	NJ
Overall Excellence	Local Origination	Over $400,000	Vision Cable of Pinellas	Vision Cable of Pinellas	Clearwater	FL
Overall Excellence	Public Access	Under $400,000	Mid-Peninsula Access Corporation	Mid-Peninsula Access Corporation	Palo Alto	CA
Overall Excellence	Public Access	Over $400,000	Boston Neighborhood Network Television	Boston Neighborhood Network Television	Boston	MA

1995 Keynote Speech

Communication, Adaptation and Evolution

by Bob Russell

DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), the molecule of biological information storage and transmission, has created a web of biological life forms which have coevolved with each other, with the physical properties of the planet and with the sun's energy.

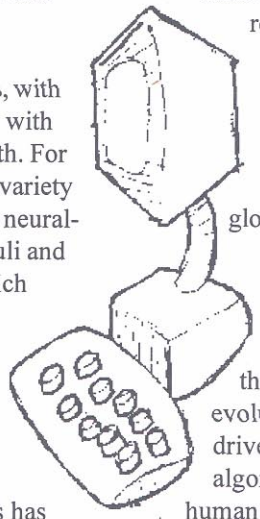
This creation/evolution of life on this planet has been unfolding for a time period that exceeds 4 billion years. Life on Earth has become a complex interconnected system during this time span. Life continues to adapt and evolve, driven by the genetic algorithms inherent in its DNA. Algorithms are formulas or recipes for solving problems.

"To survive, maintain and evolve, biological systems must predict the future."

These genetic algorithms are analogous to the algorithms used in software to create operating systems and programs for computers. Both adaptation and evolution provide feedback into the web of life sustained by the pool of DNA-based genetic algorithms. Evolution creates change; adaptation helps organisms react to and anticipate change. Life is the continuation of information perpetuated by clever genetic algorithms, a dance between adaptation and evolution. **Richard Dawkin,** in his new book ***Digital River,*** makes the point that all current life forms carry successful DNA. Every living being is the result of an organism staying alive long enough to reproduce and pass its genetic algorithm into the future—success breeds success.

Feedback, an essential property of complex systems, functions to help organisms adapt and evolve by providing communication, the flow of data and information. Life forms have feedback mechanisms based on the interaction of chemical and neural processes. The human organism handles feedback through a complex interaction between our endocrine and nervous systems. Our bodies are constantly communicating and gathering data to maintain a stable condition for survival. Feedback is communication.

Because communication, a multi-directional exchange of data, information and knowledge, is an essential tool for feedback, life forms on Earth have evolved a variety of internal and external communication channels that provide the raw data for processing by biological intelligence. To survive, maintain and evolve, biological systems must predict the future. DNA, being the underlying "intelligence" for biological systems, must communicate, and does so on a cellular level in all organisms on Earth (well almost... there are some RNA-based life forms). Within an organism, DNA communicates its instructions with chemical messengers. Outside the cellular level DNA has evolved other communication mechanisms so species can communicate with themselves, with members of other species and with the physical properties of Earth. For organisms to communicate, a variety of mechanisms have evolved: neural-networks for processing stimuli and responses; sound organs which both send and receive; visual organs; glands that secrete pheromones or chemical messengers; and other methods not currently understood by the human species.



The evolution of humans has brought us to the point where our DNA can "see" itself and its place in the cosmos. We are perhaps the most complex life form that DNA has created on this planet. Communication within our species is extraordinarily complex as a result of our ability for language. Even when it was only vocal, it accelerated the social/cultural evolution of our species. Then about 4000 years ago the ability to write the language began to emerge. The writing of language was a quantum leap for human communication. It projected communication into physical space and time, outside of the purely biological construct. Before written languages, communication was confined to small groups in a limited geographical space and only passed information to the future via the synaptic storage of our brains.

Our ability to write language means that data, information, knowledge and wisdom are no longer limited to oral communication only. Humans created a means to communicate into the future, outside of the chemical process of genetics and synaptic storage. DNA and synaptic storage are no longer the only way to pass information into the future. The ability to write and store language, first on stones and papyrus, has linked our species over ever greater space and time. The development of paper and the mechanized printing press further revolutionized communication. The publishing of books, magazines and newspapers became a major form of international communication towards the end of the 18th century and began the globalization of communication.

Communication is an evolutionary process. Human biological evolution brought us to the point where language developed. Since the development of language, the evolution of communication has been driven by forces outside of the genetic algorithms of DNA. The acceleration of human knowledge is in a positive feedback loop with the rapid technological change fueled by the digitalization and storage of most forms of human communication: written language, sound, and visual—the digital globalization of human communication.

The globalization of communication has not provided uniform access. Communication in the form of publishing on paper, TV or radio has the distinction of being a

See *Keynote,* page 17...

Boston '95

Continued from page 11

relationships deepened, the commitment was renewed, and the mission became clarified. This conference underscored the strength of the Alliance and its vision to move our dreams forward."

Rika Welsh is a founding member of the Alliance for Community Media (then the NFLCP), and Executive Director of Malden Access Television. She has served on the Alliance national board for nine years, and chaired the planning committees for the 1985 and 1995 annual conferences.



Sacramento Educational Cable Consortium Executive Director Liz Rhodes, who accepted the Community Communications Award for Institutional Access on behalf of SECC, enjoys the Boston '95 activities with Little City Foundation Executive Director Alan Dachman, recipient of the George A. Stoney Award for Humanistic Communications.



FCC Cable Services Bureau Chief Meredith Jones confers with Boston Neighborhood Network (BNN) Executive Director Hubert Jessup, who received the 1995 Buske Leadership Award, and who accepted the 1995 Community Communications Award for Public Access on behalf of BNN.

Conference photos by Frank Monkiewicz, Cambridge Photography

Do what's right. Do it right. Do it right now.

MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM

(Please check all that apply)

Yes, I want to join the Alliance for Community Media. I am a(n):

- ❑ Access Staff Member
- ❑ Access Board Member
- ❑ Community Producer
- ❑ Cable Regulatory Staff or Board Member
- ❑ Other

ORGANIZATIONAL

- ❑ Over $100,000 annual revenues $305
- ❑ $10,000 to $100,000 annual revenues $195
- ❑ Under $10,000 annual revenues $85

All organizational memberships expire on September 30th of each year. Join between April and September and pay half the annual rate.

INDIVIDUAL

Affiliated (available only if your organization is a member: includes paid staff, volunteer producers, board members or other unpaid individuals associated with a member organization)

- ❑ Staff $40
- ❑ Volunteer $30
- ❑ At-Large (includes professional or volunteer individuals who are not associated with a member organization)
- ❑ Advocate (volunteer) $35
- ❑ Professional (salaried) $85
- ❑ Patron $120
- ❑ Life $1000

All individual memberships expire one year from the last day of the month in which you join.

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION

I am including an additional amount to further support the activities of the Alliance and help broaden participation in the organization.

❑ $10 ❑ $15 ❑ $25 ❑ $40 ❑ $50 ❑ $ _____

SUBSCRIPTION ONLY (not a membership)

❑ Community Media Review (6 issues) $25

(Canada $30, other non-U.S. $35) CMR Subscriptions expire one year from the last day of the month in which you sign up.

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED $ _____

NAME AND ADDRESS (Please print)

Membership name (individual or organization)

Contact Person (organizational members only)

Mailing Address

City State Zip

Phone (___) _____ Fax (____) _____

Name of organization of affiliation (affiliated members only)

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

- ❑ Nonprofit
- ❑ Educational institution
- ❑ Library
- ❑ Government
- ❑ Cable system
- ❑ Other for-profit organization

TYPE OF FACILITY

- ❑ Public access
- ❑ Educational access
- ❑ Government access
- ❑ Local origination
- ❑ Leased access
- ❑ Other

DEMOGRAPHICS (individual members only)

This optional information will help us to better serve current and potential members.

- ❑ Black
- ❑ White
- ❑ Hispanic
- ❑ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ❑ NativeAmerican
- ❑ Other
- ❑ Female
- ❑ Male

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1995 -1996 ACM Board of Directors

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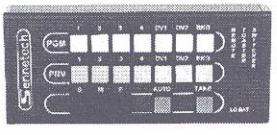
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Keynote Speech

Continued from page 14

one-to-many communication channel that results in an uneven distribution of political, social and economic power to the 'ones' who communicate to the 'many.' Corporations, governments and religious organizations have always had the greatest access to communication infrastructure and the trend has accelerated in just the last few decades. (See the book *Media Monopoly* by **Ben Bagdikian**). Some of the more "privileged" members of our species are engaged in a global communication network that allows many-to-one, one-to-many and one-to-one digital communication.

"It seems only natural that we would create a global feedback mechanism that functions somewhat like our biological one."

They can access information, exchange data and weave webs of information and thoughts into the virtual global neural net. The network provides this linked group of humans with the advantage of "seeing" and "hearing" on a global level. This provides them with an opportunity for predicting the future—anticipating change—at the global level. The members of this group have created a feedback mechanism that is far greater than any other species. Given that humans are here to perpetuate the DNA they are transporting, there might be some connection between the evolution of our language, communication technology and the evolution of our species.

See *Keynote*, page 22...

Community Media: Thriving in the Technology Revolution

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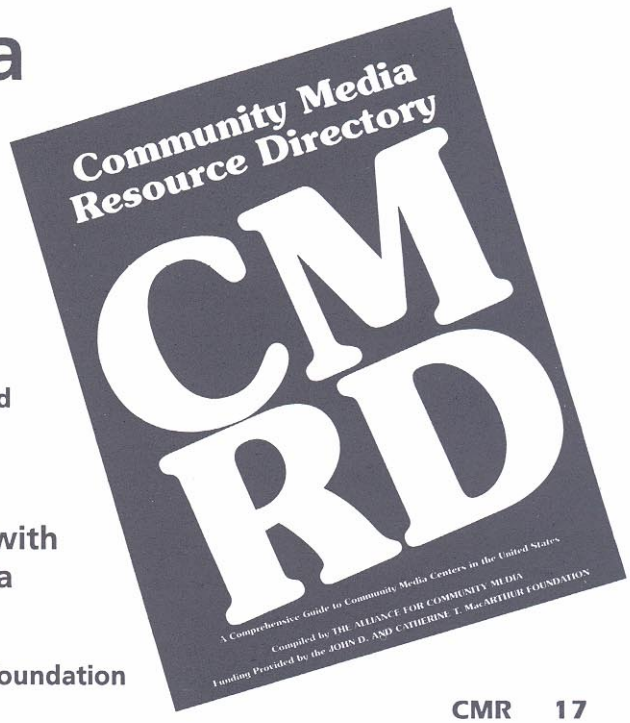
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Dangerous TV

by Chuck Peterson

Watchers of local TV news in Grand Rapids, Michigan recently had exposure to three stories pertaining to "Controversial Programming on Public Access". During May and June, news crews from the **CBS, NBC** and **ABC** affiliates each jumped on the story of uncensored "smut" appearing on community cable apparently with the blessing of **GRTV** officials. These stories referred to locally produced, late night music video shows that at one time or another contained segments which most would consider tasteless. Each news program took a slightly different angle on the topic but all seized the opportunity to point a finger at public access and alert the community to the potential dangers of letting *just anybody* have free speech.

My first reaction to the media onslaught was, "Here we go again! Why does the corporate media insist on portraying public access as purveyors of sleaze when 99% of our programming is positive, community oriented and generally inoffensive?" But when I had some time to reflect, I realized that it wasn't *personal.* They are just doing their job which (of course) is selling Toyotas, tennis shoes and toilet paper. Controversy helps them to sell products.

With some of the animosity behind me, I was able to recognize this experience as a rare opportunity to examine the news-gathering process and also spend some serious time pondering the nature of my job. Why should I go out on a limb (and into people's living rooms) defending unpopular and perhaps tasteless speech?

Since all three networks chose to interview me, I was able to make some first-hand comparative observations. First; I sensed that the individual reporters were a little ashamed to be doing the story as each confided their personal empathy, some pointing to their corporate entities as making them do the stories against their own personal judgement. I suppose that calling it empathy could be kind. Perhaps it was manipulation.

I also noticed that it really doesn't matter that much what you say in an interview. You can only illustrate the reporter's pre-conceived notions. They are looking for a particular line that they would have written themselves but journalistic practices require that they get *you* to say it. Even if you make an incredibly profound, concise statement about your position, they are under no obligation to use it.

The most enlightening revelation to me was the notion posed by the reporters that *TV is supposed to be safe!* I think they all believed that their own stations protected the public from dangerous images and ideas. I beg to differ! Which is more dangerous to society; public access which occasionally portrays fringe opinions from the real world or commercial TV which is designed to create an audience of passive consumers?

Television is not safe! It is a powerful drug and like all drugs it can be used for good purposes and it can be abused. Like any recreational drug, TV viewing should be regulated in the home by a responsible adult and while under its influence one should question what one perceives. Bringing TV into the home is a risk and with that risk should come responsibility. If you, as a parent, bring alcohol or other drugs into your home, you put it on a high shelf or a locked cupboard. The same precautions should be taken with your TV. Unfortunately, society has allowed commercial TV to be perceived as safe and in many households is even used as a babysitter. This tragic perception (I believe) is largely responsible for a society where consuming is the national pastime, people *pay* to put a billboard of their favorite product on their clothing and kids carry guns which they use to shoot other kids over their product-sponsored clothing.

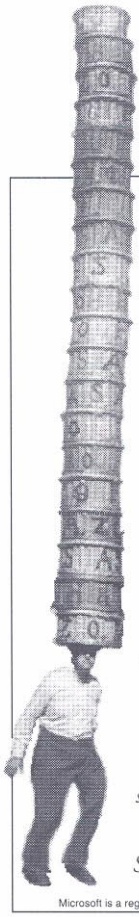
I would never try to pass off the above mentioned, citizen sponsored, late night, music video shows on GRTV as safe for general consumption. Perhaps they are even harmful to some naive minds. Allowing them to be shown brings me no particular joy. The principle behind their being permitted to be shown on a public forum is the principle expressed in the First Amendment to our Constitution: the right of every individual to not be persecuted for their speech whether it be religious, critical of government or even "bad" art.

The complaint of many is that certain programs should be scrambled to prevent unqualified censors (teenagers) from watching "unsafe" programs (sort of like a child protective cap). Ironically, the motive for scrambling programs on pay TV has little to do with protecting society and everything to do with making money. Seeing nudity or hearing foul language is not illegal on cable TV. Non-commercial, legal speech is permissible on access. Determined teenagers will always find a way to acquire the forbidden whether it be drugs or TV images. Parents can only help them to make informed decisions.

I do not disagree with the concept of scrambling programs containing adult material; however, I think the first step would be a Surgeon General's warning between all commercial TV programs that says:

Watching television may lull your

See *Dangerous Television,* page 23...



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First Amendment Preservation

Alliance Goes to Supreme Court

Release from ACM National Office

Washington, D.C. — The **U.S. Supreme Court** announced today that it will review the constitutionality of a 1992 law authorizing cable company censorship of some types of constitutionally-protected speech on some cable television access channels. The case, **Alliance for Community Media et al. v. Federal Communications Commission (FCC),** involves the named petitioner, along with co-petitioners **Alliance for Communications Democracy** and **People for the American Way.** The case will be decided in conjunction with a companion case also brought against the FCC by the **'90s Channel** and the **American Civil Liberties Union.**

"...cable TV operators would nix programs that merely hint at being controversial."

Barry Forbes, Executive Director of the Alliance for Community Media, stated, "The very idea of the government authorizing cable TV operators to regulate the content of public access channels is ludicrous! More than likely, the cable TV operators would nix programs that merely hint at being controversial. We believe programming should be held to community standards as determined by the courts — and we're delighted the Supreme Court has chosen to review this important government censorship case."

The Alliance and the co-petitioners are appealing the June 6, 1995 decision of the full **D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals** in Alliance for Community Media et al. v. FCC (56 F.3d 105). The Supreme Court will be reviewing a section of the 1992 Cable Act that stems from a last-minute Senate floor amendment. The section under challenge enables the operator of a cable television system to prohibit programming on public, educational or governmental access cable channels (commonly referred to as "PEG access") based on content. Affected programming could include programs on the AIDS/HIV epidemic, abortion, childbirth, art censorship, and civil disobedience.

As written, the 1992 statute allows a cable operator to suppress programming which contains so-called "indecent" material, or material soliciting or promoting unlawful conduct. Also being challenged are 1993 FCC regulations implementing the statute.

"This case has enormous implications, not only for the content of television programming, but for freedom of expression and the right of privacy on any electronic medium which the federal government attempts to regulate," stated Forbes. "An adverse decision could expand the rights of the government to decide what people can say and what viewers can see over the cable medium."

Originally, a three-judge panel of the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals found that the 1992 provision violated the First Amendment, which prohibits government interference with free expression and communication. The initial opinion would have struck down the provision, and consequently prohibited operators of cable television systems from censoring any materials protected by the First Amendment. However, the FCC asked for and received a rehearing by the entire appeals court for of the District of Columbia circuit. The eleven-member court overturned the previous panel's determination, holding that any censorship that might occur on PEG and leased access channels would be a legitimate exercise of editorial discretion by the cable operator, incidental to its proprietary rights. Because, according to the court, the actions would be those of private entities against other private entities, the censorship would not be subject to the same level of judicial scrutiny under the First Amendment as direct government censorship.

"We believe that the D.C. Circuit dismissed the First Amendment jurisprudence on 'state action' and 'public forum' doctrines," stated Forbes. "The earlier decision missed the point that public and leased access channels were created as public fora by federal, state and local laws. As government-created entities, they should be subject to the most rigorous First Amendment protections. We're pleased that the Supreme Court will give us an opportunity to settle this important point."

The law firm of **Shea & Gardner,** which represented the Alliance petitioners before the FCC and in both phases of the D.C. Circuit proceedings, will continue its pro-bono services to the Alliance and co-plaintiffs. Representation will also be provided by staff attorneys at People for the American Way and the **Media Access Project.**

The Alliance for Community Media is a national, non-profit membership organization committed to assuring everyone's access to electronic media. The Alliance accomplishes this by disseminating public information, advancing a positive legislative and regulatory environment, building coalitions, and supporting local organizing. Founded in 1976, the Alliance represents the interests of over 950 public, educational and governmental ("PEG") access organizations and local origination cable services throughout the country. The Alliance also represents the interests of local religious, community, charitable and other organizations throughout the country who utilize PEG access channels and facilities to speak to their memberships and their larger communities.

Information is Power

Continued from page 9

tions;

5) Information on the state of relations between your access center and the cable company, whether good or ill;
6) Information on difficulties encountered in starting or maintaining an access center, whether technical, contractual, legal, or political;
7) Information on other services your center provides (particularly internet and computer access related);
8) Information on how access is making a positive difference in the lives of both producers and viewers.

Your cooperation would help assure that the Alliance can provide the type of information policymakers and the public needs to get the full story on public access. Thanks!

Organism Internet

Continued from page 5

Theuth, who was the inventor of many things, including number, calculation, geometry, astronomy and writing. Theuth exhibited his inventions to King Thamus, claiming that they should be made widely known and available to Egyptians. Thamus inquired into the use of each of them, and as Theuth went through them expressed approval or disapproval, according as he judged Theuth's claims to be well or ill founded. It would take too long to go through all that Thamus is reported to have said for and against each of Theuth's inventions. But when it came to writing, Theuth declared, 'Here is an accomplishment, my lord the King, which will improve both the wisdom and memory of the Egyptians. I have discovered a sure receipt for memory and wisdom.' To this, Thamus replied, 'Theuth, my paragon of inventors, the discoverer of and art is not the best judge of the good or harm which will accrue to those who practice it. So it is in this; you, who are the Father of writing, have out of fondness for your off-spring attributed to it quite the opposite of its real function. Those who acquire it will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on writing to bring things to their remembrance by external signs instead of by their own internal resources. What you have discovered is a receipt for recollection, not for memory. And as for wisdom, your pupils will have the reputations for it without the reality: they will receive a quantity of information without proper instruction, and in consequence be thought very knowledgeable when they are for the most part quite ignorant. And because they are filled with the conceit of wisdom instead of real wisdom they will be a burden to society."

-Postman, ***Technopoly***

"Will information technology liberate us or subjugate us?"

Beware of false prophets who worship in the temple of profits. Motives rule. Technology has always been a two-edged sword. It is somewhat amusing in this regard to hear commercial reports on the Internet that portray it as savior or satan or both at once. Postman goes on to point out that radical technologies create new definitions of old terms. Thamus mentions that writing will change what is meant by the words "memory" and "wisdom." He fears that memory will be confused with mere "recollection," and he worries that wisdom will become indistinguishable from mere knowledge.

"...technology imperiously commandeers our most important terminology. It redefines 'freedom,' 'truth,' 'intelligence,' 'fact,' 'wisdom,' 'history' - all the words we live by. And it does not pause to tell us. And we do not pause to ask."

You combine the insidious usurping of values with the disintegration of time/space relativity due to the nature of ones and zeros cursing at the speed of light, and Pandora opens another box she didn't even know she had. No doubt the 'horse is out of the barn' but reasoned debate based on fundamental facts needs to attract Americans like the OJ affair.

If we are destined, as Thoreau states, "to be tools of our tools," then how can we rein in this info-virus to a manageable trot? Regardless of our mechanical and technical wizardry to move ones and zeros in gigabits at gigahertz, our eyes and ears receive all this data only slightly faster than our grandparents. And short of bioengineering, our grandchildren will digest info only slightly faster than us. And what of the motives of the technophrophets? Historical indications are that the vast majority of information technology (radio/television) will be commandeered to intermittently entertain us between pitches to purchase and consume.

One critical and legitimate component communities have to guide the growth of the Information Circulation System is the public right-of-way. Every commercial telecommunication provider that wants to do business in any community has to use community-owned space whether it's the strip between the sidewalk and the curb or the air over our heads. We the people own the public airwaves and the rights-of-way in our community. A fair approach to blend the needs of free enterprise with community building is to trade access to the community space (right of way) for space on the telecompanies' systems. Additionally a price per mile fee paid and applied to community networks and public access sites would round things out nicely. If communities have access to a free percentage of the veins and arteries and can fuel information training, tools and traffic from a small percent of gross revenues from commercial providers, they can build the foundation for a smart community to evolve.

Whether Planet Earth or an amoeba, for any organism to thrive and prosper a proper balance needs to be maintained. Not too much or too little fuel, oxygen, water, wind or information. Communication is one of the most fundamental building blocks on Earth from the replication of DNA to the code sequence for nuclear missile launch. World citizens need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the Information Circulation System with the knowledge to guide the inevitable. Will information technology liberate us or subjugate us? Will we be empowered or disenfranchised? Will the information rich get richer and the info poor, poorer? Will we need to cross the bioengineering line to increase the speed of our information reception? Can we feed people with fiber optics? I don't know, but I hope so, since futurists predict overpopulation and starvation as the most critical survival event for our species next century.

Dirk Koning is Chair of the Alliance for Community Media's Editorial Board and Executive Director of the Community Media Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Alliance Web Site

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Ron Fitzherbert <ron@penguin.net>; Ann Flynn <aflynn@innet.com>; Mike Henry <henrymp@aol.com>; Dirk Koning <dirk@grcmc.org>; Paul Levalley <paul@channel33.org>; Anne C. Mitchell <amitchel@ednet1.osl.or.gov>; Julianne Murray <jmmurray@aol.com>; Tony Riddle <gaia@mtn.org>; and Richard Turner <rdturner@aol.com>.

Kari Peterson is Chair of the Alliance Information Infrastructure Committee as well as Executive Director of Davis (California) Community Television.

Twelve Tips

Continued from page 6

critical documentary, aired several times, will undoubtedly grab the attention of your fellow journalists. Remember to remind them when the show is airing.

Tip #8: Keep up with the hot issues in the media. Read your local papers and the mainstream press to see what is being written about. If some of your programming deals with a "hot" issue, write a press release about it, explaining why the show is relevant to the issue and how it contributes to the debate.

Tip #9: Find appropriate occasions to sponsor "press events." Offering your facilities to local charities and non-profit groups for fundraisers and parties will bring press people into your center and give them an opportunity to see what you are doing. This is a good opportunity to drive home the message that PEG access is a part of community life.

Tip #10: Don't shy away from controversy. Don't be afraid to let the mainstream media know if you are having a dispute with a cable operator. The press corps loves a fight and the dispute will give you an opportunity to educate the reporter about your issues. This kind of story is a natural for "Community David v. Corporate (out-of-town) Goliath" reportage—an aspect worth playing up. It gives you an opportunity to put your "spin" on the story.

Tip #11: Write opinion pieces and letters to the editor. Stress the overall PEG access message and illustrate it appropriately. These "op-ed" pieces are especially powerful if tied to articles that have already appeared in your paper about the wonders of the information superhighway. Remember to drive home the message that PEG access is the public on-ramp to the information superhighway, and that on-line access helps build the skills and knowledge of community residents.

Tip #12: Listen to the people on the street. Go to a local site (such as a shopping mall) and poll people on their views about public access. Better yet, videotape them and edit the positive comments for PSAs and promos. Be sure to listen to all the comments. The negative comments should be acknowledged and a response devised. The response can be part of your PSA.

Building Momentum. You probably will not see immediate results — but don't give up! Your public relations program will create a positive impression over time. You'll find that your activities are considered newsworthy more often. As you get people's attention, you will likely get more political support from local officials, bigger budgets from your city government, and you will increase the number of people in the community who are willing to go to bat for PEG access. In 1995, every additional bit of support counts!

Jeffrey Hops is Director of Government Relations for the Alliance for Community Media. Special thanks to Boston Neighborhood Network Public Information Director Mary Clayton Crozier for her ideas and suggestions.

Trainers' SIG

Continued from page 8

jesikah maria ross, Davis Community Television, 1623 5th St., Ste. A, Davis, CA 95616. Phone (916) 757-2419, e-mail: jmross@wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us. Incorporate training in everything you do. Communicate with others who have similar goals. Join the SIG.

Julian Ross Braver and jesikah maria ross serve as co-coordinators of the ACM Trainers' Special Interest Group.

Had Enough "Interactive" Hype?

A lot of hype and flash have been thrown around the last couple of years regarding interactive this and that, including the information superhighway, Internet, World Wide Web (WWW), interactive bulletin boards, etc.

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FACT: RTC's RT2 interactive systems currently run on public access, government, educational, senior center, and commercial channels in ten states, at over twenty locations, and abroad.

FACT: RTC now has the **only product** that enables you to offer your viewers not only interactivity with the databases you create locally, but **access to Internet and the WWW** as well! That's right, you can offer your viewers access to Internet and the WWW right on your cable TV channel through RT2.

Oh, one more thing. Commodore Amiga is now ESCOM Amiga. Amiga, the first and only truly media computer is alive and well, and to celebrate RTC is knocking **$500 off the price of our basic RT2 package until Sept. 1, 1995.**

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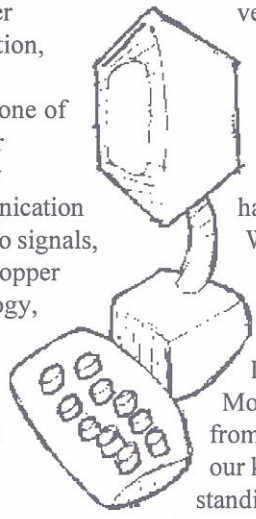
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Keynote Speech

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It seems only natural that we would create a global feedback mechanism that functions somewhat like our biological one. This network creates greater feedback and more rapid adaptation, perhaps leading to accelerated evolution. Has DNA passed on one of its evolutionary functions to our species or are we assuming it by mistake? Will this global communication network of satellites, digital radio signals, fiber optic cable, coaxial cable, copper wires, packet switching technology, digital real-time video images, and other forms of computer mediated communication—cyberspace—create a neural net similar to our central nervous system?



Cyberspace is already inhabited by a number of select humans. And then, there are the humans who are not in cyberspace and may never be. If this is an evolutionary adaptive process linked to DNA somehow, will the "cyberspace" dwellers and "realspace" dwellers become so divergent that they will develop into different species? It seems unlikely, but they are already in a different social/economic class. At the very least we need to acknowledge the widening gap between these two groups and begin to discern what effect this gap will have on our species.

When the corporate media talks about cyberspace they are usually referring to the Internet in some way. Most of the "news" comes from the corporate media so our knowledge and understanding of cyberspace (internet/infobahn/multimedia/video-on-demand/digital cash/wireless/cellular) is based on their perceptions of it or more likely how they want to package it to continue using any and all forms of communication to sell products. Remember, the role of the media is to keep capitalism in hyper-drive—consumption is everything. And realize that the media corporations are diversified transnational corporations and they want to control and use the global communication network for their ends, keeping capital moving through their part of cyberspace.

"The global communication network...may be more of a byproduct of our genetic algorithms than a selected result."

In the United States the use of the World Wide Web, a part of the Internet that moves the most packets of data, is currently dominated by rich white men. It is a frighteningly clear reflection of the current social/economic/political power structure in the United States, and although it might not be white men in other parts of the globe they are mostly rich males.

Is this global telecommunication network a result of the genetic algorithms that created our species? If so does that

Continued on next page...

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Keynote Speech

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mean that rich white men are the current pinnacle of our species evolution? Seems unlikely. The global communication network may have the appearance of a neural network, but it lacks in complexity, size and the ability to reproduce itself. And more important it's too controlled to be a truly self-organizing system based on its complexity. It may be more of a byproduct of our genetic algorithms than a selected result.

The digital global communication network as it is currently unfolding is not going to empower and connect all the members of our species. It can't, because the corporations building it are not interested in altruism. And altruism is the reason it would make sense to network our species together.

At the individual level our mind/body works together to maintain a healthy productive evolving person. It does this by efficiency, cooperation and communication. We are constantly engaged in altruism within ourselves. So what happens if we expand our communication to more and more of these mind/bodies that are engaged in efficiency, cooperation and communication? Would the world be a better place? Would we lose our diversity and become a monoculture? Some fear a "global village" instead of a "globe of villages." A liver cell and a fibroblast look and act differently, and yet, they work together in our bodies for the good of the whole.

Can we all be connected and improve the lot of humanity? Will digital communication networks move us towards that understanding? Maybe that depends on who takes part in it.

Complexity theory postulates that systems reach a certain level of complexity and either evolve to another level of organization, fall into chaos and collapse, or fail because there isn't enough complexity to fuel the system. All current DNA life forms have passed the test of continuing to increase in complexity without falling into chaos or simplicity. Do life forms that fail, fail from too much complexity or too little? Do social structures fail because of too much or too little complexity? Probably both events happen, too much and too little—the edge is a fine line.

"...the globe is being "wired" and I don't think we have the option not to pay close attention to that. It will change the way our species coevolves with the earth."

Networking our species globally, and I mean all members of the species who want to be, would most certainly increase complexity. What would happen then? Would we evolve to a new level of human organization or fall into chaos?

I realize we need to make communication work at several levels below global: family, community, and bioregion. But the globe is being "wired" and I don't think we have the option not to pay close attention to that. It will change the way our species coevolves with the earth.

We do have choices, lots of choices about how to be involved, too numerous to mention. Each of us needs to be engaged in life the best we can; to be present is to communicate.

In the absence of presence there is no communication. Without communication there is no change. Be here now, take part, we all make a difference. If we all make a difference; it will be different.

Bob Russell is the co-director of the Neahtawanta Research and Education Center in Traverse City, Michigan and a partner in Traverse Communication Company, a commercial Internet service provider.

Dangerous Television

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brain in an alpha state making you highly suggestible to sponsor messages and values. Watch critically!

My point is, commercial TV news condemning a small percentage of community programming is a bit like "the pot calling the kettle black."

On the plus side, I agree with one reporter who said, "It will give you the opportunity to publicize your side of the story." It was fun and challenging to try and express the mission of GRTV through the blinding sensationalism of TV News headlines. It is an important message in an era when free speech is at risk...which is precisely why I go out on a limb for unpopular speech.

Chuck Peterson is Station Manager of GRTV, public access television in Grand Rapids, Michigan, an affiliate of the Community Media Center.



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